

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PALERM 00009 071622Z

67

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FM AMCONSUL PALERMO

TO AMEMBASSY ROME

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, IT

SUBJECT: FR. SORGE OF CIVILTA' CATTOLICA PAYS POLITICAL VISIT
TO PALERMO

REF: PALERMO 0002

1. FR. BARTOLOMEO SORGE, S.J., THE FAMED DIRETTORE OF THE ITALIAN JESUITS' MAGAZINE CIVILTA' CATTOLICA, HELD TWO LECTURES TO CROWDED AUDIENCES IN PALERMO ON JANUARY 2 AND 5.
2. HE ENDORSED THE NO (TO COMMUNISM) OF THE ITALIAN BISHOPS AND MAINTAINED THAT THE CHURCH HAS NEGLECTED TO FACE UP TO THE MARXIST CHALLENGE. HE SAID , "WE ADMIRE THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF MARXISM. BUT AT WHAT PRICE TO MAN?...BISHOPS HAVE THE DUTY TO PROVIDE TO CATHOLICS AN ETHICAL-RELIGIOUS ORIENTATION# ITS POLITICAL EXPLOITATION IS UNAVOIDABLE, BUT UNFORTUNATELY THERE IS NOTHING WE CAN DO ABOUT IT." HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT A 1948-STYLE CHURCH INVOLVEMENT IN ITALIAN POLITICS COULD TURN OUT TO BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE--UNLESS THE FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS OF MAN ARE THREATENED IN ITALY.
3. FR. SORGE'S LECTURES WERE ATTENDED BY SICILY'S TOP DC POLITICIANS. THE ISSUE THAT HE RAISED WILL UNDOUBTLY CREATE DEBATE BOTH IN PALERMO'S RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL COMMUNITY. THE LOCAL MODERATE DAILY, THE GIORNALE DI SICILIA, IDENTIFIED FR. BARTOLOMEO SORGE AS THE MAN THROUGH WHOM THE VATICAN SPEAKS.

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PAGE 02 PALERM 00009 071622Z

SORGE'S VISIT REINFORCES OUR BELIEF THAT FROM HERE ON, THE CHURCH

WILL BE SPEAKING ABOUT POLITICS MORE OFTEN IN SICILY. CHIAVARINI

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